



Boston Centerless

Driving Efficiency with Made2Manage

CASE STUDY

Customer Details

Boston Centerless is an industry leader in supplying precision ground bar materials and grinding services, specializing in extremely close tolerances.

Industry

Metal Fabrication

Aptean Solution

Made2Manage ERP

Challenges

- Existing software was nearing obsolescence and lacked analytical features
- Manual preparation required for complex specification documents
- Needed to reduce lead time for processing orders

Benefits

- 20% increase in production with no additional staff
- Increased on-time delivery from 88% to 98%
- Reduced time from order receipt to the production floor from three days to one
- Increased the volume, accuracy, and timeliness of information available to decision-makers

Boston Centerless is an industry leader in supplying precision ground bar materials and grinding services, specializing in extremely close tolerances.

The Boston Centerless AccuRod® Division provides ground bars and rods cut to length for close tolerance machining applications, grinding a wide variety of materials such as stainless steel, carbon steel and alloys, titanium, tool steel, plastics and exotics. The GrindAll Division offers a range of grinding services for customers furnishing their own material or components. The PinGage Division manufactures a line of ultra-precise gages to validate precision measurements with absolute accuracy.

Old System Grinds to a Halt

In the past, Boston Centerless used manufacturing software that was developed as a custom application based on the Pick database and operating system. As of a few years ago, the program was technologically outdated and didn't provide the level of analysis needed in today's manufacturing environment. Furthermore, support for the software was very limited.

Emphasis on Support

Boston Centerless Director of IT, Robert Berger, had prior experience with another leading ERP system designed for mid-sized companies. "This ERP system was sold to us and supported by a reseller. Without a direct relationship with the software vendor, I found that it was days before someone got back to me on a support issue."

"One of the key factors that contributed to the selection of Made2Manage ERP is that the software is supported directly by Aptean, which makes for a much closer relationship. When I call for support, the vast majority of the time I get a technician on the phone immediately.

Sometimes, the technician solves the problem on the spot, and in other cases, he or she needs to research the problem and get back to me. In any case, the problem is resolved much faster than it would have been with the other ERP software provider.”

“Our systems and resource management are aligned with common goals that start with strategic planning and development of major goals and objectives,” Berger added. “We track our progress in achieving these goals through monthly reporting and analysis of sales, production and inventory information. This process is reinforced with daily production meetings and value stream huddles to discuss performance and improvements. One of the main tools that we have to achieve goals is regular evaluation of our business process in order to reduce non value-added time.”

Reductions in Quote-to-Delivery Lead Time

Made2Manage ERP has helped Boston Centerless make major contributions toward their goals by enabling the company to automate many of its business processes, establish uniform best practices throughout the organization, and provide a real-time source of information that leads to more-informed decisions. For example, Boston Centerless was able to fast track going live with Made2Manage ERP by incorporating the use of the Advanced Configurator module as a tool for developing customer quotes and sales orders with a higher level of accuracy. The configurator uses wizards to ask the user a series of questions, resulting in complete and consistent orders. This has allowed Boston Centerless to be more productive with their staff and has had the cascading effect of allowing inside sales to be more responsive, reliable, and efficient.

Boston Centerless customers typically order bar materials ground to ultra-precise tolerances. In many cases, they also have specific requirements for roundness, straightness and surface finish. Depending upon the application, there may also be stringent specifications to which the material selected must conform, requiring selection of specific heat lots that match the customer’s specifications. Some customers want a copy of

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the mill certificate and others want a certificate of analysis on letterhead with an excerpt of chemical and physical properties from the mill certificate. And most customers want these documents to ship with the material.

Boston Centerless used to manually generate these documents. The company oftentimes typed the document for customers that wanted the certificate on letterhead. Then, it was necessary to manually marry the certificate with the shipment. “This was a very labor intensive process,” Berger said. “Now, we enter the data for each heat lot of material into a custom table, and when the order is ready for shipment by specifying the heat lot used for that order, Made2Manage ERP automatically generates the proper certificates with the shipper for the order.”

One very simple, but extremely useful, customization was accomplished as a partnership between Boston Centerless IT and the Made2Manage customizations team. Normally, specifications—such as tolerances and finish—are entered into memo fields. Using FastForms and custom code, the system was modified to store critical specifications as unique fields.

The advantage is that quotes and orders can now be parsed by these fields for analysis and reporting. By delivering key operational data, Boston Centerless management is better equipped to perform the business analytics needed to improve the performance of their business and focus on how to

best run and manage operations to meet current and projected customer demands.

Improvements in Business Processes

Through another partnership between the Made2Manage customizations team and Boston Centerless IT, the system was enhanced to match the unique way the company reviews costing to accurately generate competitively priced orders. A cost/pricing screen incorporates all of the routing steps for the order. From this single screen, the user can review and adjust everything that is required to determine how to best price an order. Boston Centerless has achieved significant reductions in non-value added time by regular and frequent re-examination of business processes. Their latest project is the implementation of an Order Processing Cell. It is anticipated that the overall lead time for orders processed by the team can be reduced from approximately three days to one day with an ultimate goal of one hour, through the elimination of queues and further use of Made2Manage ERP.

“What sets us apart is not just our ability to produce ultra precise, industry-best ground bar stock with consistency in tolerance, roundness, and straightness, but also the speed to market and added value that we can bring our customers through our enhanced ERP system,” said Berger. “Made2Manage ERP allows us to capture critical information and analytics for improving and further automating business processes, giving us a competitive advantage and helping Boston Centerless earn a reputation for exceptional quality and service.”

“Overall, Made2Manage ERP helps us operate at a higher level of efficiency by being more productive, responsive and reliable,” Berger concluded. “Since we implemented the ERP system, we have increased our on-time delivery percentage from 88 to 98 percent. We have improved overall efficiency, allowing us to support an increase in production in excess of 20 percent, without having to hire additional staff such as sales or order processing.”

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“At Boston Centerless, we hold the perfect balance of technology combined with years of experience and a vision and core values that support our ability to be recognized as a World Class Operation.”

Interested in learning more about Aptean Made2Manage ERP? Please contact your account manager or email us at info@aptean.com.



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